TION-A PREDICTION OF CAMPANINI'S. The only operator is the great "Aida." menanances: Early in 1371 the Viceroy of Kerpt desiring a grand piece for his new theatre in Cairo, caused Verdi to be written to upon the subject. The latter, after consultation with a friend, agreed to write a new opera, the subject to be suggested by an Egyptian litterateur, for £4,000. These terms were at once accepted by the representatives of the Egyptian Government, and the ground work for the libretto of "Aida" forwarded to him. This was taken in hand by Ghislanzoni, the gifted Italian writer and by him arranged for the stage. Verdi was greatly impressed by the originality and strength of the plot, and by the novelty of the scenes with which it dealt. To use his own words, 'so striking was the story, so vivid the language that in reading it I could readily imagine myself upon the banks of the Nile surrounded by all the magnificence of an ancient Egypt, or dreaming in flower groves lit by a tropical moon." Feeling thus deeply, it may readily be imagined that Verdi set about his great work with enthusiasm. His long rest from composition had strengthened and invigorated his mind. New ideas, fresh fancies crowded upon him. The andor, the warmth, the bright glow of his youth came back to him, and a ripe experience was present to direct and keep within bounds his imagination. In addition, there is no doubt that the master had at this period of his life profited greatly by a careful study of the best German music. Not of the mathematical harmonies of Richard Wagner, as some self-confident critics have glibly stated-such assertions Verdi himself in the most unqualified terms declared to be utterly without foundation-but the real German music of the heart and soul, the music of Beethoven, of Mendelssohn, and particularly of Schumann, The study of such music could not fail to have much effect upon him. At least it gave new b nt to his thoughts and suggested many a new idea. So equipped he worked as is usual with him when thoroughly aroused, and in a comparatively short time he had completed his greate t opera, "Aida," He lost no time sending the score to Cairo. It was received and examined by the celebrated musicians who had assembled there to aid in its pro duction. They were, of course, delighted with it but they were also surprised. They found that Verdi, after four years of silence, a silence which many had predicted would last until the grave, had surpassed all the efforts of what had been regarded as his prime. That he was not only the Verdi of the past, but more, far more. That to all the old warmth and sweetness of melody, all the old delicacy and lightness of touch all the old brilliancy of fancy and execution

depth and subtlety of harmony which had never been even suggested by his earlier The last general rehearsal of Aida was practically a first performance. The house was illuminated with unusual brilliancy Half an hour before the rising of the curtain every seat was filled. Celebrated musicians front various countries were present, as were also a number of critics, who had been sent from Europe to represent different journals. To say that the opera was a great success would but faintly describe its reception by this distinguished audience. Its every number was applauded again and again. Its magnificent setting, scenery, costumes, and appointments were lavishly praised. The singers-Pozzoni-Anastasi personated Aida, Grossi Amneris, and Mongini, Rhadames -were obliged to repeat scene after scene, and it was only with the most persistent effort that the conductor succeeded in disregarding the cheers of the people and finishing the opera before daylight. The Khedive, with the rest, was delighted, and sent a personal telegram to Verdi thanking and congratulating him. The press, too, was glowing and almost unanimous in its praise. The triumph of the new work was complete. It has since, with equal success, been pro-"duced in all the great cities of the world. Indeed, so uniformly successful has it been that even Verdi might well be satisfied let it remain not only his greatest but his last operatic work. This, for the past 10 years, he has been content to do. Now, however, it may be announced, despite every assertion to the contrary, that this long silence is in due time to be broken. The libretto of a new opera, founded upon Shakespeare's tragedy and to be called "Othello," has been in the hands of the master for two years, and though he is, even to his most intimate friends, exceedingly reticent upon the subject, it can be stated that "Othello" is almost ready for production.

he had added a new strength and vigor, a

new and comprehensive grasp of details,

a new and altogether unexpected grandeur

of thought, a massiveness of orchestration, a

It was on a bright day during the past home, Sant' Agnta. With his near friend panial, I drove from a little railway station it is in the woods and fields he gets his ideas. to Busseto, ten miles distant. Then on And thanks to his quiet life he is still a through rich vineyards past the commanding young man, young despite his 68 years of elevation upon which, in his honor, has trial and triumph ; so young in fact that the been erected the Teatro Verdi, and yet a world of music may yet find cause to agree little further along the well-kept highroad with Italo Campanini who says: "Verdi's to a rustic bridge which crossed the then dry bed of a mountain stream, and led to the broad high gates of Sant' Agata. There is no nemense about the maestro. He is great enough to be simple. Everything around his house is plain, substantial and well kept. Entering the gates, which are opened by a black-eyed, langhing-faced peasant not fail to use the celebrated Kidney-Wort. It girl, the visitor finds himself in a broad is a dry compound, as easily prepared as a cup avenue, which leads by the side of the low, of coffee, and in one package is as much mediwide-spreading house, and into a commodi- cine as can be bought in six dollar bottles of one sourt. Crossing this, one has a glimpse other kinds. Physicians and hospitals are conof the reaching grape vines, rich meadows, stanely using it with great success.

towering shade trees, and beyond, the dim purple outline of the mountains. From the court, open the wide doors of the dwelling upon a great hall built after the prevailing Italian fashion and designed to secure a GENTLEMAN-HIS MODE OF LIFE-SURROUND- through draught of air during the warm INOS OF THE RESIDENCE-"AIDA'S" PRODUC- days of Summer. On the threshold as we went toward the house stood a gentleman somewhat above the middle height, not stout, and dressed with scrupulous care in a suit of plain dark cloth. That he was a man of consequence, of distinction in the world pould not fail to be apparent to even the nost casual observer. A first glance would be very apt to give the impression that he was a deep-thinking lawyer, an extensive financier, or a great capitalist. There was certainly-if I may use the expressionnothing obtrusively artistic about him. His full gray-white beard was carefully cut and and trimmed, as was also his thick, strong hair. He affected neither wide open collars nor flowing neckties. His general appearance was plain, dignified, reserved, almost severe. Not one thing about him, save, perhaps, his dark, deep, carnest eyes, gave the slightest indication of warmth or passion, yet, as it is almost superfluous to state, he stood there the author of more glowing, passionate music than any man who ever lived. The quiet gray bearded gentleman was Giuseppe Verdi. He welcomed his visitors with simple, unaffected cordiality; said he hadjust returned from a walk through his grounds, patted the head of a beautiful hunting dog which looked affectionately up at him ; playfully called his friend Campanini 'the rich American," and then invited us nto the hall past a billiard table much used by the Maestro, as I afterward learned, and nto a wide, cool saloon, furnished with simple elegance, and decorated with numerous paintings, some of them representing scenes from "Aida." Shortly afterward we were joined by Mme. Verdi-"the great Strepponi"-an exceedingly able and well informed woman, yet, like her husband, simple and unaffected. Of the long and most interesting conversation which followed it is very difficult to write, difficult because of the impossibility of giving on blank white paper anything like an adequate idea of the charming manners, the keen, wholesome wit, the depth of reading, and, withal, the great kindliness and consideration for others -musicians, authors, singers, and actorswhich were displayed by Verdi and by his wife. Of other great composers the Maestro speaks not only with kindness and consideration, but with positive admiration; that is say, he finds something to admire in the works of them all, and what he cannot approve he does not criticise. Still, he is never injudicious or inconsiderate in his praise. That he was so at times might well be inferred from the stray scraps of gossip regarding him which now and then find their way into the newspapers.

Real modesty is one of the man's leading haracteristics. It is positively disagreeable to him to be praised to his face, and to this feeling is doubtless to be attributed his lisinclination to visit foreign countries. Yet he is most anxious to see America, and, despite his dislike for the sea, he thinks if he lives that he may do so. "It must be a wonderful country," he said, "a wonderful country, and I should so much like to see the great Niagara-"

But you never will," broke in his faithful wife. "You are too much wedded to your Villa Sant' Agata." This was said as

we were taking our leave. Doubtless the sensible and far-seeing Strepponi spoke the truth. She knows better than any one else how much her distinguished husband is attached to his country me and the life he lives there. And well he may be so, for a more peaceful existence, and one more free from care and anxiety of every sort, it would be difficult to imagine. It is the habit of the maestro to rise at 5 'clock in the morning, and, after partaking grounds. Then he usually rides one of his many horses for an hour, and afterward, with good appetite, eats his always frugal ALLCOCK'S POROUS breakfast. He is then ready for billiards, his favorite game, and sometimes indulges in the pastime for hours, without intermiswalking about the country visiting the poor people of the neighborhood, who are much attached to him and, in a quiet, unostentatious way, doing good wherever he goes. At 5 o'clock he dines, and then, after slight exercise, retires to his study. It is a pecuand containing little furniture save a great round table littered with books and music sunny corner is the grand plane. At the time of my visit a well-worn book of Schu mann's sonatas was open upon it. Over the nstrument is an oil-painting, a remarkable study of an old white bearded man, and beside it a number of shelves for music. In this room, when the humor is upon him, Verdi-sometimes shuts himself up for days. To use his wife's expression in commenting upon the fact that he wrote the score of vous Headache, Mental Bepression, Loss of Mem-'Rigoletto" in 40 days, "When he gets his ideas together he never stops till he has worked them out." But it is only when he is working out such ideas that he departs

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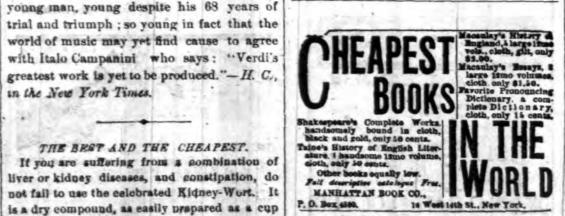
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